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ABSTRACT

This book presents an ethnohistorical examination of American Indian thinking and philosophy and strives to explain the complexity of the American Indian mind in its traditional cultural and natural environment and in contrast to the American mainstream linear world. It is argued that Indian thinking is visual; circular; concerned with the relationships among all things, including both human and nonhuman entities; embedded in both the physical and metaphysical realities; and focused on achieving balance, both within oneself and in the community. Chapter 1 details this world view. Other chapters discuss: (2) the importance of story and oral tradition as the basis of traditional knowledge; (3) circular philosophy, the significance of the circle of life and its cycles, and the "natural democracy" of respect involving all things in the universe; (4) Indian intellectualism and the nature of Indian genius; (5) boarding school experiences, conflicts between White teachers and Indian students, and the resilience of the Native intellect; (6) origin and history of American Indian studies, the need for it, and how it is striving to become an academic discipline; (7) Native scholarship, cultural ownership, and research protocols in Indian communities; (8) Indian-institutional relationships and the development of tribal colleges and museums; and (9) the center of the circle of life, balance, and well-being. (Contains references in notes, an index, and an extensive bibliography) (SV)

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